

Smelt Update

Thursday – January 14, 2009

Conditions:

Commercial fishers in Zone 2 have likely caught in excess of 1,000 pounds this past week. There has also been a movement of marine mammals from County Line Park up to the Cowlitz River the last several days. Sturgeon fishing in the Cowlitz has picked up. So, it is not a surprise that today's test fishing in the Cowlitz River has yielded a few fish per dip.

The flow at Castle Rock is at 18,300 cfs and dropping (approaching the median daily discharge for this date). The river is much less turbid than last week (under 200 FNU this week versus exceeding 1,500 FNU last week). Water temperature is at 43°F (6.0°C) in the Cowlitz River and 42°F (5.4°C) in the Columbia River. Smelt prefer water of at least 40°F or warmer.

Overall the sport fishing prospects for this coming weekend look fair.

Catches:

Columbia River:

Sport: There were no reports of smelt being dipped by sport fishers this season.

Commercial: No commercial landings were reported for December 2008.

Mainstem Columbia River landings are continuing to increase each fishing period. Today's catch will likely exceed 1,000 pound.

Cowlitz River:

Sport: There were no reports of sport fishers on the Cowlitz for Saturday, January 3rd or 10th.

Commercial: No commercial landings reported for January 4th, 7th, 11th, or 14th. 0-lbs cumulative since January 3rd.

Sport Seasons/Regulations:

Tributaries - Sport dipping is only allowed on the Cowlitz River, from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays through March 31st. The daily limit is 10 lbs per person per day. This is equivalent to ¼ of a 5-gallon bucket.

Mainstem Columbia River daily limit is 25 lbs per person per day and the fishery is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Commercial Seasons:

Columbia River: 7-hour fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays.

Cowlitz River: 6-hour fishing periods on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Fishing Rule updates are also available by calling (360) 696-6211, then press *1010

Here are some web sites that provide daily river data:

Cowlitz River water flow and levels: USGS Web site:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14243000&PARAmeter_cd=00060,00065

Columbia River estuary water temperature: CORIE Web site:

<http://www.ccmlmr.ogi.edu/CORIE/network/woody/>